

Feudesse

The Journal of Satire of the Postal Diplomatic
Community September 4, 1984

A NOTE TO FEUDEES

This publication contains some pointed commentary. I planned it that way. I hope that no one receiving this is hurt or offended. My intention is not to add to the world's misery, but to subtract from its folly. Good satire illumines and ribtickles at the same time. That's what I'm striving for. Regrettably, a sudden flash of illumination can cause some temporary discomfort. So be it. I do not place myself above examination. Camera-ready satiric manuscripts are solicited, including those that throw cream pies and spray seltzer water at me. In addition, I am calling for an open discussion in the Hobby of DipConGate and offer Feudesse as a forum. See nonNotForPrint.

Lest there be any doubt, the next section is dedicated to my best friend in DipDom who publishes my favorite zine that I just cut trade with. It is patterned after his regular column of the same name.

HobbySlur



BRUX Linsey
73 Ashuelot St., Apt. 3
Dalton, MA 01226

CLAIM CHECK NO.
486512

DATE ☐ HOLD

8-28

1ST NOTICE

2ND NOTICE

RETURN

Detached from
PS Form 3849-A
Feb. 1978

Ed Wrobel

P.O. Box 3463

Arlington, VA 22203



POSTAGE DUE 17

It looks like that BRUCE LINSEY will go to any lengths to recover the money I "owe" him since I "folded" Politesse, even sending his obese publication with insufficient postage. I paid the 17¢ this time but I don't intend to make a career out subsidizing the distribution of attacks on the (now ex-)BNC or the destruction of any other of Bruce's enemies. Speaking of Voice of Doom, yet another special anniversary issue is due out this fall, but this time with an interesting twist: Bruce has announced his intention to publish a quality

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product rather than simply assembling as many pages as possible. An intriguing experiment, Bruce, and very unlike you! Good luck....DON DEL GRANDE ran off from Marycon before the awards ceremony and now he wants his certificates--fat chance, huh? No wonder KATHY BYRNE calls him "del dumb"....ERIC KANE in Anduin and FRED DAVIS in Bushwacker were surprised by Politesse' third place finish in the Runestone poll, the former pleasantly so, the latter not so pleasantly. Fred, of DipDom's old guard, would rate Politesse no higher than twentieth. He carefully points out that his differences with me on other matters (i.e., his racist and sexist slurs in his zine, his highly irregular revision of the map in East Indies after the game had begun and over my protests, his curious performance on the DipCon Administrative Committee in 1981-82 and his lack of co-operation during VariMaryCon) have nothing to do with his low ranking of Politesse. The reason? Well, he just doesn't consider Politesse to be a postal DipZine. Fred didn't mention that Politesse carries about as many postal games as his own zine, and more than Diplomacy Digest or Diplomacy World, both highly rated in Bushwacker. Of course, both of those zines have the word "diplomacy" in the title and are published by friends of Fred's. I guess that's the difference. Politesse does carry nonDip material, nearly all of which is game-related, unlike Fred's flights of fancy in Bushwacker on how the low rates of venereal disease in South Dakota are due to the absence of a sizeable black population....ROD WALKER and MARK BERCH have been inundating me with not-for-print, secret, do-not-mention-receipt-of, do-not-paraphrase-or-draw-from correspondence. (Their letters published here are nonNotForPrint, at least as of this typing. It seems that Rod writes later that his missives were obviously not-for-print, even if not marked so, and Mark retroactively labels entire sets of his correspondence do-not-draw-from without specifying dates, recipients or even the number of such letters!) These gentlemen seem to have a lot to hide. Their secretiveness is out of character, though. For example, Mark regularly reprints other people's material in Diplomacy Digest without asking for permission, although several people have recently protested that they do not wish to be associated with his zine. He has also criticized DICK MARTIN for attempting to limit the circulation of House of Lords, telling his readers that Dick is trying to keep something from them. Rod, in his dispute with JOHN CARUSO over publicizing somebody else's game openings, asserted in Voice of Doom #57, "In any event, I'm for freedom of information and the players' right to know. There is also the fact that I am an independent publisher, and I have a right to print anything which is in the public domain. You are not yet the Il Duce of postal Diplomacy, John, so please do not try to tell me what I may or may not publish." It is convenient for Mark and Rod to stand up for freedom of the press when it serves their interests but to assert a right to privacy when they wish to conceal a conspiracy or a piece of vicious hate mail....GARY COUGHLAN has been printing a picture of some guy in a jester's suit and claiming it's me. My wife has been trying to find out who that other woman is in the photo....KEN PEEL is attempting to negotiate a marriage contract between SEAN VESSEY'S daughter, LAUREN (born June 5, 1984), and my son, ERIC (born May 21, 1984), but delays are being caused by the Vesseys' refusal to provide an endowment to ESSE PUBLICATIONS, LTD....Haven't heard from rules' lawyer, BOB BRAGDON, in a while....Decided not to mention JULIE MARTIN in this column after all....MARK LUEDI wants to know why everyone thinks he automatically sides with Bruce....Ditto KONRAD BAUMEISTER....LARRY PEERY may or may not print my anti-solidarity piece....Gary will probably stab me in Bahnhof Zoo this month. I talked with him by telephone and everybody knows what trouble I have with "fones"....My stock is up in the World Diplomacy game.

BENDING THE RULES: GAMING

In the first installment of this, the only novice package to explain Dipdom as it really is, I discussed the basic triad for success in the world of postal Diplomacy: purposeful mediocre performance in games, active involvement in controversies, and publishing. After several months, I believe it is now safe to reveal that these three guidelines are not always hard and fast rules. The most prominent personalities -- those at the pinnacle of Dipdom -- will often "bend" the rules to emphasize their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses.

But before proceeding with this follow-up article focusing on compensation for weakness in the gaming leg of the triad, I would like to reemphasize the importance of establishing a firm grounding in the fundamentals. The case studies that follow demonstrate the often vital role of ingenuity and creativity in reaching the ranks of the hobby elite, but are not intended to discount the value of nurturing an alliance structure through large draws and second place finishes, of seeking out the opportunistic manipulation of controversies, and of knowing when to be the cautious peace-maker (when at disadvantage) and when to go for the jugular (when the other guy is down). And, of course, as one begins to establish a name in Dipdom, there comes a point where further gains practically require publishing, with the special status it gives to those who engage in "The Trade."

As I mentioned in my previous article, Steve "Woody" Arnawoodian represents the archetype of the postal virtuoso whose invincibility comes from deep and balanced strength in all three areas. Most other greats, however, have some weaknesses, for which they must compensate. Often, this process entails creatively redefining the potentials of one or two of the other legs of the triad, thereby providing the opportunity for entrance into the upper reaches of MegaDip.

In Dipdom today, two of the most influential individuals -- Kathy Byrne and Mark Berch -- have developed surprisingly similar solutions to their common, although somewhat different, deficiency in gaming. Kathy plays in nearly as many games as the legendary Woody, but she seems unable to restrain herself from winning. This means that at some point she ends up stabbing everyone she plays with, and her larger alliance structure suffers as a result. Mark Berch, on the other hand, does not win an inordinate amount of games, but then, he has never played in many. Because of his instinctive reticence to wade deeply into the arena of the common dipper, Mark usually limits his playing to a few high visibility "superstar" demonstration games. The problem with such games is that the players are drawn from a narrow and inbred pool.

Mark Berch and Kathy Byrne have, however, proven extraordinarily inventive in the areas of publishing, and equal to the best in conducting controversies. They both have realized that the importance of playing games is not in the gaming itself: through alliances forged in games one is able to build and replenish one's alliance structure among the various hobby strata. Mark and Kathy avoided the prospect of certain obscurity due to their gaming deficiencies, by inventing hobby service publications that give them unique status and the ability for extra-gaming alliance-building. As everyone knows, Mark oversees (there is no other word) the publication of Diplomacy Digest, and Kathy publishes Kathy's Korner -- respectively, the hobby reprint and the hobby name-in-print services.

Kathy's success was her realization that everyone in Dipdom loves to see his or her name in print. She peddled this precious quantity in the shape of a "subzine" without games, composed of gossipy silliness, animal jokes, nickname contests, exaggerated and frivolous abuse, Olsen flirts, and other seemingly deadly-serious undertakings. In reality, these are merely convenient vehicles for giving KK the highest name-per-page ratio in the history of dipzines. Through subliminal orchestration of the strong in-group identity this creates among KK regulars, and by making each of them feel special by claiming she doesn't want any more subbers (thus attracting new subbers every month), Kathy has forged one of the strongest, yet most unorthodox, power centers in all Dipdom.

Mark Berch's success with Diplomacy Digest is equally unique. Mark established DD six years ago as a vehicle for preserving and popularizing the history of Dipdom by reprinting and commenting on articles centered around specific themes. As a result, the barristerish and expansive-minded Mr. Berch became regarded generally as the hobby history custodian. DD quickly developed deep respect and a high subscription list, and Mark's reputation grew.

Mark understood the reverence that Diplomacy players hold for history and, not so incidentally, he discovered himself in a class of his own. Mark's success in using DD to building a hobby alliance structure, however, grew out of his manipulation of deeper forces. Everyone instinctively understands that history is written by the victorious, that history is made everyday, and that the early bird gets the worm. Thus, since there really is no separation between hobby history and current events, Mark is able to offer to those in his alliance the assurance that no matter what actually happens, the written record will chronicle events and controversies correctly.

The startling success of Mark Berch and Kathy Byrne can be compared to the case of the once great and powerful Rod "Mr. Diplomacy" Walker. Rod's tragic weakness is also in the area of gaming but, unlike Mark and Kathy, he is aware neither of that fact, nor of the reasons for his current difficulties.

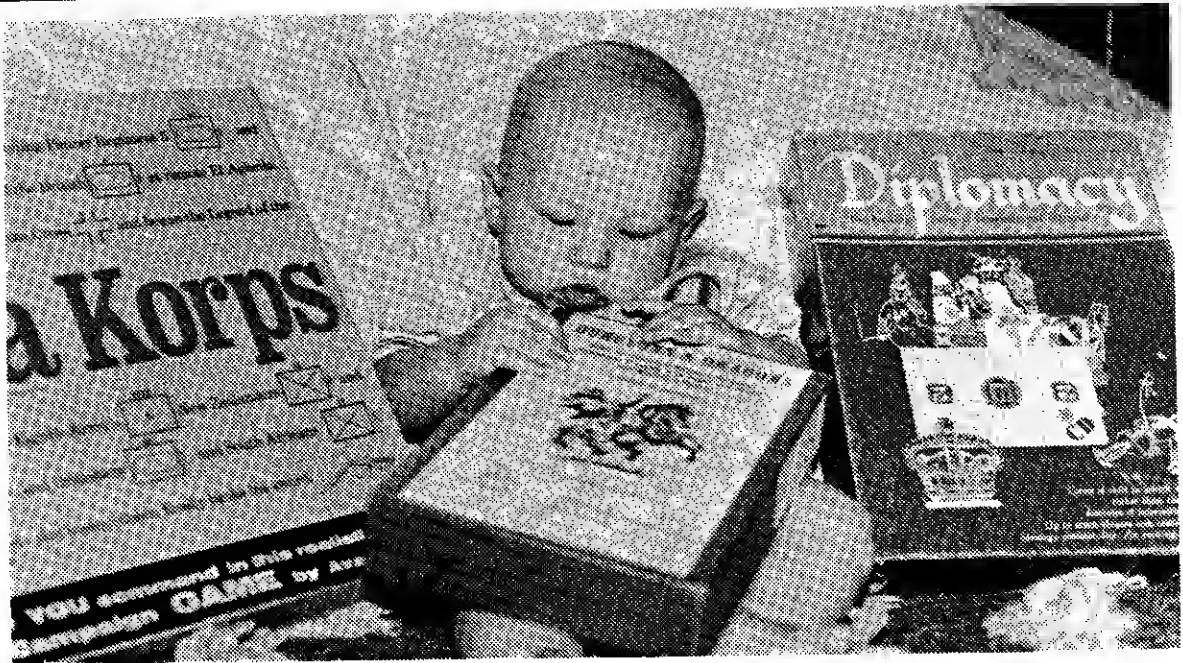
Rod was not always weak and isolated in the world of postal Diplomacy. He originally entered Dipdom in 1966, way back when the archaic term "Diplomacy fandom" was still used. In the late 60's and early 70's, Rod was one of Dipdom's most popular publishers, and was highly regarded for his valiant battles against the evil dippers of greater New York. No one could wage a controversy like Rod, who could write blizzards around his adversaries. At that time, he was also a highly rated win-oriented player, which makes his accomplishments all the more impressive. In retrospect, perhaps everything came too easily. But with his personal charm, with his ability to write dozens of witty and clever 8-page letters a day, and with unparalleled skill in leading his legions to war (especially his uncanny ability to switch positions on issues several times as the need arose without anyone noticing), Rod was one of the bright, white captains of MegaDip.

In the late 70's, however, Rod took a several years' leave of absence from Dipdom, and discovered upon his return that his entire alliance structure had vanished. Rod paused but a moment to reminisce, then tried to pick up where he had left off. It is clear now that he never understood the importance of the careful construction and nurturing of one's alliance structure before entering with full force the brawny realm of MegaDip. To make matters worse, Rod stalwartly eschewed playing in any new games, which at least would have brought him into touch with the new forces of Dipdom. Needless to say, the current powers-that-be were highly suspicious of this flamboyant newcomer, and viewed his antics darkly. Rod did find a niche of sorts after taking over Diplomacy World and starting up Pontevidria (a game opening zine similar to KGO), when he struck up a troika agreement with Bruce Linsey and Mark Berch to establish a network of mutual referrals. But without running or playing in games, and without any compensatory mechanism, Rod could not provide the quid pro quo necessary for building up his MegaDip alliance.

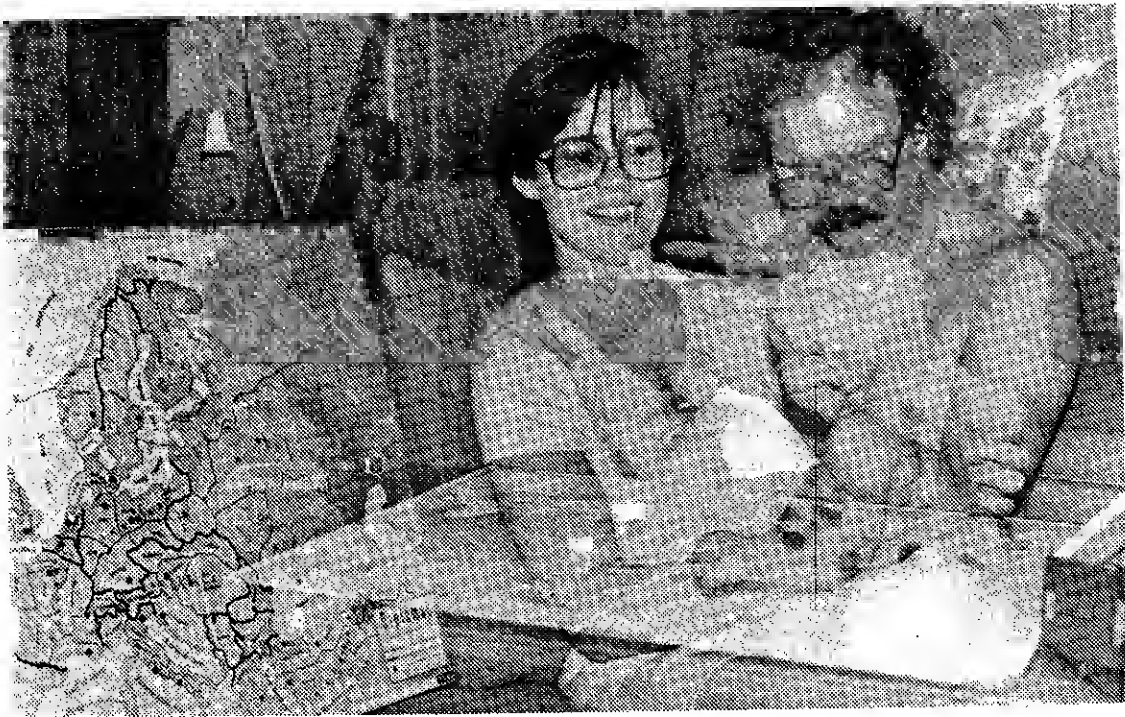
By the time Rod finally recognized his own weakness, he had already managed to galvanize major cliques in Dipdom against him from of his repeated unsupported forays into the hot controversies of the day. To shore up his position, Rod restarted his old gaming zine, but it is doubtful that even Erehwon can be sufficient to compensate for the damage already done. Rod's best hope is to reenter the world of gaming -- this time doing it right -- but he still seems unaware of the true role of games in Dipdom. Tragically, Rod remains infected with a tendency common to the elite and former elite of Dipdom: avoiding games from fear of embarrassment at the hands of the groundlings. In the best of cases, this only ensures a slow ebbing of influence over time. In Rod's case it is proving disastrous.

Whether novice, elite or inbetween, one must remember that there is no short cut to success. Hard work and attention to the fundamentals are required to achieve it and to maintain it. Ingenuity can help build on the fundamentals -- or, as in the case of Mark Berch and Kathy Byrne, help compensate for a specific weakness -- but it cannot replace them.

With the retirement of Snafu Brown, a new BabyPix custodian arises!

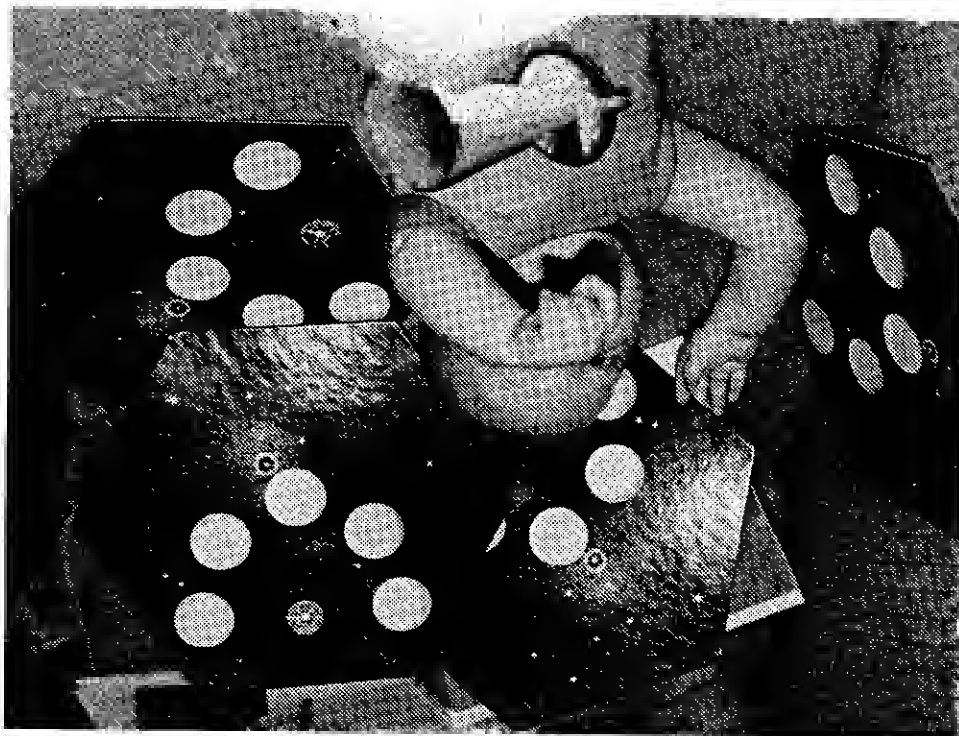


Who knows if a child will grow up to prefer classic hexagonal, multiparticipational negotiational or fantasy role-playing pastimes? Like many gamester his age, Eric eschews the harsh realities of modern warfare and diplomatic chicanery, choosing instead the gentler confines of an imaginary dungeon.

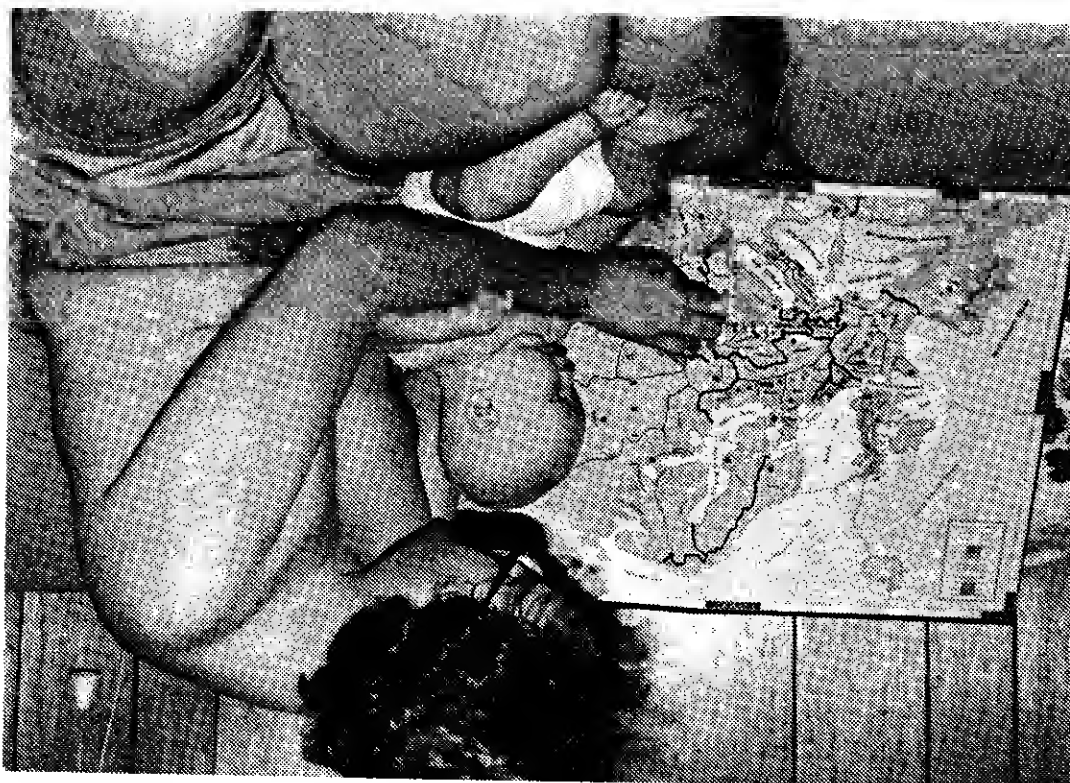


A surrealistic double exposure of the entire family.

But Eric again displays a preference for more imaginative pursuits.



Here Papa Ed holds son Eric and explains that gamesmasters vary in their interpretation of mutual support orders.



Letters to Feudesse should be marked...

nonNotForPrint!!!

From BOB OLSEN

Please dry your eyes and put away that hara-kiri knife, for I rise in testimony to the pellucid clarity of your verbal formulations, despite what the Hobby Houserules Inspector might say to the contrary. As is well known, you are incapable of obscurantism and a stranger to the very concept of obfuscation. As a representative of the hobby's thickwitted, slow, amorphous creatures (if it suited my purpose, I could snivel and whine about that line for months, and perhaps even devise a feud about) I give my review of Politesse: Here are truths that burn like iron, and beauties that pierce like cold steel. (Well, Bob, if you can't say something nice, then you probably haven't read Peery's call for Hobby Solidarity based on Reagan's political career! -ed.)

Still, if I might venture a bit of criticism, your refusal to provide the address of the commanding officer of the felonious and probably deranged Jim-Boob Burgess strikes me as inconsiderate and wrongheaded. Therefore, for the convenience of those who include such techniques in their behavioral repertoire, I would like to announce that Mr. Burgess' commanding officer may be reached at the following address:

Bernard A. Tretick
XXXXX XXXXXXXX XXXXXXXX
XXXXXX XXXXXX XX XXXXXX

(Sorry, Bob, but I don't intend to fall for that old trick. I am firmly opposed to confusing DipDom with reality and I refuse to aid anyone's efforts to do so. -ed.)

I have pointed out to our beloved BNC the appropriateness of the following aphorism: "The malice of the unworthy is more to be prized than an illuminated vellum." Truly a wealthy woman indeed, in both ways. I would question your description of the Dark Side big-shots as "experts at disinformation," however. A more accurate term might be "clumsy, blatant, utterly unconvincing liars." (Whoever could you be talking about? -ed.)

P.S. Enclosed please find a contribution to the Politesse/Feudesse cause. I will certainly be interested in the latter zine, knowing that guided by correct thoughts and ideological purity, you will maintain a commitment to the furtherance of the Light Side, not to mention politesse. (Don't just ask for a "light"-- be sure to ask for a Zine Light! -ed.)

From ROD WALKER

I do object, however, to your cutting off discussion of this in Politesse. I feel that, at the least, I have a right to reply to your comments, and have the reply printed. The next portion of the letter is for that purpose. (Rod, I would have gladly printed any for-print rely you made but instead you sent me an extremely nasty coutesy copy of a letter to Mark Berch (Berch had written to both of us about the matter) and clearly stated that you would not reply in Politesse but would reply in your own zine. You complained bitterly that the postcard I printed was intended not-for-print and that the Berch letter was not-for-print. Now, after I have announced Politesse's new editorial policy, and provided clear reasons for the change, you want me to reverse that since you have had a change of heart. No. Feudesse is the proper forum for such discussion. You have made much of your 18-year-old policy on press and how you'd be damned before you'd change now just to suit your players. Here you want me to change my editorial policy just to suit your moods. I suppose the difference is in the longevity? -ed.)

I have made similar comments to Steve Hutton in a recent letter regarding the Erewhon article in Diplomacy World. His comments in No Fixed Address, and

yours in Politesse, both proceed from an assumption which is not clearly stated. That assumption is one of these three: (I have used the "arrogant" to describe various formulations of Rod's so often that it would be jejune to do so again here. But, seriously, thanks for giving me a pick of three. -ed.)

1. (Yes, patient reader, dreaded enumeration! -ed.) It is wrong for me to combine in that fashion a news item plus a favorable (or unfavorable, I suppose) review of the 'zine in question. That is, I shouldn't do this for anybody.

2. It is OK for me to do this for other 'zines, but not my own.

3. It is OK for me to do this, but you believe I would do it for my own 'zine and not for others.

4. If I may be so bold as to identify a possible alternate assumption? Maybe it just looks silly for you to toot your own horn so loudly in the same issue you assert that Dip World is not your zine, but a hobby service that deserves the support of good DipDomites everywhere. It looks to me as if you are appealing to Hobby patriotism to support a forum for advertising Erewhon. -ed.)

Depending on which one is your underlying assumption, my response is:

1. That is a question of editorial taste, I suppose. (Or lack thereof? -ed.) De gustibus non est disputandum. (I'm not really an expert on Latin, but I believe this can be loosely translated as "I argue that your taste is in your mouth, your mother wears army boots and it's my zine and I'll do what I like." Oh, excuse me, rather, "it's my hobby service and I'll do what I like." As I say, my Latin is a little rusty, mostly confined to phrases like "et cum spiritu tuo" and "dominus vobiscum" and the like. -ed.) This is not a moral issue, then, and doesn't merit having so much ink spilled on it as has been. (I agree: using a hobby service to sell your personal wares is not necessarily moral. -ed.) We can agree to disagree, but I intend on continuing to print similar review articles.

2. This asks me to adopt a double standard. I don't believe in double standards. Besides, the deed is done and if this is your assumption you will have no complaints about any similar articles which appear in the future... but it seems to me that if the next ones are just as right as the other one was wrong, they should receive coverage in your 'zine accordingly. (But I have never asserted that Politesse is a hobby service. It's just a zine, nothing special. People need not subscribe out of respect for the past or a duty to the future. -ed.)

3. I'd be pretty annoyed if this is your basic assumption. I don't operate that way. The inaccuracy of your assumption will be soon shown by exactly similar articles on two other 'zines planned for DWs 38 and 39 (on Costaguana... Conrad now having agreed to it... and Voice of Doom). So if this was your assumption it is factually wrong and, as a premature accusation, not very fair. (But, Rod, there was no sign in DW #37 that this was the beginning of a series. The advertisement for Erewhon stood alone. Is it possible you came up with the idea of converting it to a series after you were bombarded with criticism? If not, why didn't you identify it as such at the beginning? -ed.)

4. Since you didn't have a 4, I'll answer this one for you. So what if I look like a silly old Hobby fossil who has no sense of proportion? Age has its perogotives. De tyrannosaurus rex non est extinctum. -ed.)

I suppose you could also be assuming that somehow I expected to benefit personally from the article? Hardly. It is not of personal benefit to get subscriptions to a 'zine which costs me over 60¢ to produce and for which I get only 60¢. (It certainly was altruistic of you to remember to include your name, address and subscription rate at the close of the "article" on Erewhon! -ed.) Furthermore, it's well known that promotions of 'zines which have no game openings typically yield very small results. In the present instance, I've had 2 new subs. Big deal. (The ineffectiveness is not at issue. Maybe many others were as insulted as I by it. -ed.)

In fact, let's look the economics squarely in the face. Lessee... 4¢/side for duplication, x 10 sides is .40/copy if I run 100 copies. (But what if you

don't have 100 subscribers? Getting fewer than 100 copies costs more than 4¢ per side at every printer I know, and you imply the same is true at yours. If you must pay 5¢ per side, then 80 costs the same as 100. Thus, if you have 80 subbers, you can make out a lot better by having 100, since you can get those extra 20 copies for nothing. Each new subber only costs you postage. Economists call these concepts "economies of scale" and "marginal cost." I'm surprised that an experienced pubber like yourself saw fit to exclude mention of them. -ed.) Collation is .1¢/sheet or ½¢ a copy or .50¢ for the whole run. Then 1¢/sheet for the color cover, or another \$1 for 100 copies. Then we have 10 reductions @ 35¢, or \$3.50. So we have a print-run cost of \$44.50 for 100, or 44.5¢ per copy. Add 20¢ to mail, and I lose 4.5¢ on each issue or 45¢ on each 10-issue sub. That is if all issues are subscriptions, but many are trades for which there is no cash flow, and on trades the exchange is sometimes favorable and sometimes not, depending. Nobody really keeps track in those situations. The cost of 44.5¢/issue and mailing of course includes no other costs, such as typewriter ribbons, conflu, staples, paper, and so on. Add maybe ½¢ per issue for those things. Now, this isn't a staggering loss, but when you consider that the more subs I have the bigger the total loss becomes per issue (not true!! It all hinges on your marginal cost. Your entire discussion is meaningless without that vital information. Rod, do you really not know about that or are you trying to pull one over on us? -ed.) and over time, and you can see that I don't have the goal of getting myself a lot of subbers. (Oh, I see, the advertisement for Erewhon in Dip World was art for art's sake. -ed.) Many 'zines operate at a staggering loss, of course...Voice of Doom and Europa Express are big examples here. (Add Politesse to that list. My insistence on printing pictures and my refusal to go to a digest format or to mimeograph are to blame. But I'm looking for trades to cut and deadwood to burn to keep me solvent. -ed.) However, my point is that I certainly don't get any return on subscriptions and therefore that could not have been any motivation (just in case you were assuming that). (In view of your hedging on the issue of marginal cost, I have my doubts. But money isn't everything. In the game Careers, you can also win by accumulating sufficient Love or Fame points. I suspect that you really just want our Love but don't know how to go about getting it. -ed.)

I think that's it. I do feel that I should be accorded right of reply to your comments. I also feel, by the way, that Politesse is required to print a statement that my postcard arose as a result of a misunderstanding (my misunderstanding your letter), possibly mutual, and was not directed at you so much as to you and at a third party (misunderstanding being that the third party had done something not actually done). (This may appear quite mysterious to the uninitiated. It appears to me like a transparent attempt to undo what you've already done. The alleged misunderstanding does not seem to have existed at the time you wrote the postcard. In my letter to Rod that prompted his postcard printed in the June Politesse, I told him that the Erewhon plug was unwise because it provided ammunition to his enemies, if for no other reason. I said this to soften my criticism and to show him that I wasn't against him, just against this particular action of his. Rod now alleges that he took that remark to mean that he believed these enemies to have already criticized him and that his postcard was directed at these enemies. But the postcard says, and I quote, "No doubt we'll get a good dollop of the 'uglies' from New York. If you want to get out there in the mud with them, be my guest." Future tense: "No doubt we'll..." Rod did not misinterpret my remark. He concocted this excuse later after the card was published. He is also inaccurate in stating that his criticism was not directed at me, to wit, "I'm sorry that it has not dawned on you..."-- "you" presumably being the addressee, "Dear Ed." -ed.) I appreciate your desire to spare your readers a lot of mutual recriminations over this, but that is not what we have here. (On the contrary, I appreciate an

opportunity to respond in depth to the issues you have raised. In the appropriate forum. -ed.) It is regardless, not fair to cut discussion off before there has been some representation of my side of the issue. There will be a note on the misunderstanding in Erewhon. I do feel that a little more communication might have been attempted before you jumped into print. (More communication like some of your not-for-print beauties? -ed.)

P.S. Aside from this mess, I still think Politesse is an extremely good zine. (Okay, no more sarcasm, you know my soft spot. Thanks. I admit that I've gotten a kick out of Erewhon, too. It's just that you come across as too high and mighty, Rod. I look at Erewhon and Costaguana for what they are, today, not for how long they've been around. That doesn't mean beans to me. My judgements are based on content, not reputation. To me your boasts about your longevity sound empty. I don't care how old you are. -ed.)

From MARK BERCH

There was a large file of correspondence generated in 1981-1982 by those planning DipCon XV. Dick Martin tells me that well over 30 people have seen at least one letter of mine in there. I would assume you are one of them. (Yes, as a member of this past year's Committee, I received the entire file for review. As you know, the working papers of each year's Committee are passed down to the next Committee. -ed.)

Please be informed that you do NOT have my permission to draw from any of those letters written by me. That includes direct quotes, indirect quotes, paraphrasing or any drawing from the material in those letters. (I'm afraid that I talk in my sleep and it is possible that I may already have revealed some of this information. -ed.) I don't mean to imply that you intended to do this but I don't want any misunderstandings either, such as, e.g., occurred with Walker's letter. If there is a specific letter you want to draw from, send me a copy and I'll have a look. (OK, enclosed is a little play I wrote, in the best Huttonesque tradition. Your comments are welcome. I understand your desire to keep these letters secret, considering what's in them, but they really constitute the official business of the DipCon Administrative Committee and, as such, are a matter of public record. In fact, I believe there should be a complete public discussion, with full disclosure by the 81-82 Committee members, of the matters discussed in the papers. Only then can each DipDomite decide whether any wrong-doing took place. This is especially important because each of the principals is still active in the Hobby. One is serving on the current Committee. DipDom has a right to this information so that informed decisions can be made as to who should or should not be placed in positions of responsibility. In view of your own discussions in Diplomacy Digest about freedom of the press and the right to know, I can only expect you to agree. -ed.)

I noticed your little zinger in the latest Voice of Doom about my missing the Politesse-is-folding joke, and it appears I may have made another such goof. I've been told that the House of Lords petition was just a joke petition. Was it a joke? I hadn't gotten that impression from overhearing your pitch to someone on it, and I didn't get that impression from your brief comments to me. (Gosh, Mark, how many people would sign a petition if you told them it was a joke?? But who is to say what is a joke and what is not? One man's joke can be another's personal attack. For me, the petition was a somewhat light-hearted attempt to demonstrate some support for my clonemaster Dick Martin. I'd really like to see HoL continue and you guys to stop posing as the defenders of the salt of Dipdom to attack him. Heretofore, you have not impressed me as a lover of the common man or of democracy (with your permission, I will quote from the letters that have impressed me so) and I smell some extreme inconsistencies. -ed.)

From JAMES-ROBERT BURGESS

I want to make this perfectly clear. I will not be hounded nor persuaded nor cajoled nor tricked into joining your organization. I resent being categorized in any way, manner, shape, or form with Mr. Linsey. Any damn fool could see that your "fold" was a joke. (Ed's note: Apparently it took really intelligent people like Mark Berch and Bruce Linsey to fail to see that.) Mr. Linsey is well-known for these "mistakes." (Ed's note: Yes, I've noticed a few of his "errors" here and there.) I was demanding recompense for the issues that you already sent. Can't you read? (Ed: Not nearly as well as Berch and Linsey!) You know, the only method that guarantees the obliteration of illiteracy is extermination. (Ed: Surely, you must be talking about insects!)

As for federal offenses: it's your szine that's offensive. (Ed: Okay, that does it! You are hereby officially, unequivocally and irrevocably cast forth out of Politesse forever and ever, hereinafter, amen...) Your visit to the grave will result only if you succeed in placing me in your obscene organization. (Ed: Ah, so my death would be on my own hands.) I'll gladly go to jail if it means taking illiterate usurpers of freedom like yourself off the streets. (Ed: I admire your commitment to your principles.)

Your szine is excellent. You must have learned the fine art of writing marginally intelligent gibberish while failing in reading comprehension from Bob Olsen, a transplanted Kansas farmer outstanding in the field. (Ed: Are you trying to start a feud or something?) You still owe me \$3.32½. Now pay up! (Ed: Your subscription balance will be transferred to the zine of your choice.) Consider yourself lucky that I'm sending this letter free of charge (I'll call your szine an even trade.) Thank you for your time.

P.S. You and Bruce may attempt to discern the identity of my commanding officer to your little heart's content. I don't have one... (Ed: See the Olsen letter earlier in this column. Sorry that this little piece of confidential information slipped out. Now you will be prey to any looney stupid enough to take you seriously. I understand that Bruce has a certified mental health professional who is willing to testify that death threats and suicide threats should not be ignored-- for a very moderate price which is well within the WARTHOG budget. So just watch yourself.) I told you before, I don't join organizations. (Ed: H'mmm, a loner, eh? Just the type to shoot people in a fast food restaurant!) What will you do now? (Ed: It pains me to take this action. I'm not proud of it and I hope it never happens again, but I must protect myself and my loved ones, and I have plenty of allies to back me up, so I'll go for it: I am turning this situation over to my best friend in the Hobby who publishes the second-best zine, no matter what the East Coast Clique witches vote for or against in the Runestone poll, the Hobby Death Threat Custodian himself. I am sorry, Jim-Bob, or at least I'll express regret publicly so that I can maintain the high ground and look white-knightish, since I am doing this only to stop you from hurting yourself or others. No matter that if I really thought you were capable of carrying out your threats, this would be just the thing to set you off. But, of course, you and I both know what this is all really about and since I have the trump card, ESAD!)

From KEN PEEL

One thing which is interesting, is Rod's apparent need for a homogenous and powerful group of New Yorkers to rail against. What was once Boardman and Beshara, became the pitiful Sacks, and has now become Byrne and Caruso. Wasn't it a few years ago, in some context or another that Rod was scheming to "use" Caruso and Byrne against Sacks? I see that now he realizes that all New Yorkers, by their very nature, grasp for power from the good and the honorable.

IT CAME FROM MY STRANDED EGO!

Hobbyists today who retain any sense of taste, proportion or decency spend most of their time and energy lamenting the passing of the Gilded Age of DipDom. Ah, that blessed age from the 1960s when a 'zine was a 'zine, not a "zeen" or a "xyn" or some horrid mispronunciation with a long "i" instead of an "e." A time when great organizations arose and guided the faithful of a then-small and loyal fandom toward good and away from New York. A time when self-importance was a virtue, not a political liability. A time when men feared to print letters perhaps even intended not-for-print, whether or not they might make me look like an evil, manipulative, vindictive bitch. And who am I? You mean you don't recognize the sterling prose of Joe Blutarsky, elderly pubber of the blessed Swiss Knife, Pope Joan Collins' favorite 'zine, and the Best Fairy of postal Diplomacy?


Well, remember that name, bub, because coming back at you is the reincarnation of SK, in fact a clone of all the best of that holy golden cheese of a 'zine. And I am going to make certain it is the best because if I can't bully my players into some golden prose and poetry, I'll just write it all myself!! So you can be sure you are going to get plenty of highly-developed themes or characters spanning several paragraphs and interacting with one another at a high level of reference to geopolitical fantasy, yes, siree bob, real press, not the crap most of you write nowadays. It was good fun then

and I intend to make it good fun now, even if all my players quit writing or just quit altogether.

Reproduced here (in miniature-- the 'zine is small but not quite that small) is the hallowed cover of the first issue of the new, but still old, Swiss Knife. Above all, SK is a reader's 'zine (well, technically, it's my 'zine, above all else, in contrast to my other 'zine, which is not really my 'zine, but only a service for which I perform custodial duties); it is a thinking reader's 'zine, intended for the Diplomacy fen who likes a little elitism and haughtiness, "who (the editor (that's me) says) wouldn't be caught dead watching television and slurping Almaden with ice out of a tall plastic tumbler."

Joe (that's me) advises that the big (well, not big) 100th issue came out of the closet recently and can be had for \$25.00 a trick, \$100.00 for the night. Regular visits from The Best Fairy are \$6000.00 per year but there are no openings.

The return of one of the Hobby's oldest fossils is something of an event, even more so when it's me, one of the most popular and widely circulated of my kind. It's interesting to fill up this patch of white space with an observation that I really don't expect to gain many subscribers from this newsy piece but here's my name and address, just in case: Joe Blutarsky, POB 3463, Arlington, VA 22203.

SWISS KNIFE! 

 "...and, Eric, is that the first time you heard about Bruce Linsey's ludicrous gamesmastering?"



I as.....ME
 ME as.....MYSELF
 MYSELF as.....I

Welcome to the inaugural
issue of the most intelligent
amateur subpublication extant,
both in its origination
and destination....



("Cat's Paw" to those
of you who do not
speak Feline!)

The subjournal of the Feline Eggheads Naturally Superior to All (FENSA)

If you are reading this you must be a superior feline, not only because most cats cannot read but because even fewer can type, like me, Jaspur Wrobach, president of the egghead apologist SIG (special interest group) of FENSA. Studies have shown that only the top 2% of domestic cats regularly communicate through the print medium. (Maybe that's why FENSA restricts membership to the top 2%!) Of this 2%, nearly all have taken some of kind of standardized test purported to measure their worth as sentient creatures (i.e., intelligence quotient, or "IQ"). Interestingly enough, most of these also live in highly-populated areas! BUT even more fascinating is the fact that fewer than 2% are female and/or black! These facts speak for themselves. Anyone who might suggest that they could possibly represent faulty analysis, coincidence, test bias or the lack of interest in FENSA on the part of lessor breeds obviously has a political axe to grind and can be dismissed. And let's speak to this matter of test bias. A great deal has been said about it-- probably a lot more than needs to be. The ability to engage in self-justifying abstraction is what really separates the cats from the dogs. When a young kitten uses a litter pan for the first time, it is not mere instinct, it is the continual re-affirmation of individual feline intelligence. Those who test the best are the best, ipso ex officio. And if the statistics demonstrate that short-hair males who live in densely populated areas are the pick of the litter...well, so much the better! We are superior and deserve such recognition; those statistics that show we also live in the areas most highly infested by venereal disease can easily be explained away. Species loyalty is more important than mere geographic coincidence, anyway!

It's not nice to talk about these things because they are the truth and we can prove it and that makes it a sore point for the losers. A few short-sighted individuals have even gone so far as to suggest that statistical relationships do not necessarily imply causation. What nitpicking! We know in our hearts what's right, don't we? Sure. I mean, if we had to prove every one of our dearly held assumptions about eugenics, we would just be sitting around all day with our hearts bleeding, instead of going about the business of improving the breeding stock through standardized testing and selective breeding. And, personally, we haven't been a liberal since we were insulted by the sight of several black, long-haired Persians prowling the halls of our workplace without flea collars! Besides which, these individuals had probably never taken a standardized test of any kind, much less one that would allow us to evaluate them objectively vis-a-vis ourselves, not that there would be much to evaluate! (From their side, I mean.) However, we are certain that we are, indeed, superior intellectually to these creatures who have nothing better to do than prowl alleys and contract urinary tract infections by eating huge amounts of high ash-content dry food given to them for free by overindulgent owners. But you can be sure you won't see those types playing in Cat's Paw. We accept only certified FENSANS even if they don't know mice turds about Dip and drop out after 3 moves. So for a quality game, send me your kitty litter!



FOOT IN MOUTH

Issue #29

Aug.17,1984

This is FIM, the #1 International roving subzine in the world. It comes to you via John Caruso, 160-02 43Ave Flushing,NY.11358. If you have anything that you wish to say, you may send it to me, and I'll run it. Just let me know where you'd like to see it, and wala!

This issue of FIM is appearing in the 1st issue of the newest zine to hit the market, and its here by request of the publisher, Ed Wrobel. The name of this new zine- FUEDESSE(I just couldn't resist to mistype it). Feudesse will deal with the seriousness of Diplomacy- you know, things like hobbyists trying to ruin other hobbyists personal live, ratings systems, sub credits and issues due, and a host of other material. Who knows, there may even be some Dipcon updates, just to mellow things.

I'm sorry to start this off on a negative note but, I have an explanation, about something that appeared in VOD 98 recently. Linsey, wait, make that the great NOVICEBUSTER, claims that Kathy Byrne called him up prior to MaryCon and threatened to declare all of his games irregular, or some such babble like that. Mind you, a phone call, something which he is unable to prove, yet he still makes the claim. Also in the same issue, not to be outdone by the Novicebusters smugness, Paul Rauterberg, in a letter to the Novicebuster defending Kathy Byrne stated-"Yes, I know she's "threatened" to label your games irregular,". Now how the hell does Paul know this? Oh, I forget, he takes the Novicebusters word for it as Gospel! And now, may I quote one Konrad Baumeister, who for once, had something to say of importance that also makes sense- "phone conversations are particularly difficult to remember, ah, fully and correctly." I suppose I could do what the Novicebuster would do, and call him a liar, and offer \$50 if he can prove what he says, especially knowing full well that he can't. I could also say that you've heard that offer before, and he has reneged on it in the past. But I won't say that. Here is what I will say. Kathy Byrne did not make that phonecall, in fact, it was made by me, John Caruso. Copy of the phone bill is over to prove the call was made to the Novicebuster, and lasted for only 12 minutes, on May 26. As you can see, the only call to Dalton, Ma on the bill in fact. Another point- I made the call for 2 reasons, 1 to answer his OTR letter and 2nd to tell him he was getting a W/IR sub refund. We agreed on the phone that the call would be OTR. The Novicebuster has proven once again that his word is worthless and broke the agreed upon confidentiality by revealing there was a call made. Since he already violated my trust, I have no alternative but to reveal why he, Bruce Linsey wanted the call to be OTR. He threatened me- he told me that in so many words, that he was going to RUIN me and Kathy in Dipdom. I laughed in his face (literally), and asked him if I could quote him. No, I can't prove it, I didn't have the tape-recorder hooked up to the phone yet, as I do now. But, he can't prove his story either. And which story has appeared more true by what you've seen in the presses? Let me quote what the Novicebuster said to Rod Walker in answer to his letter in VOD #98- "The fact is that your criticisms of Caruso and Byrne were much more "newsworthy" items than the plug."((for DIP, my FTF con handout)) Isn't that strange? He sure doesn't sound like a guy worrying about his games being declared irregular. He looks more like a guy looking to smear 2 people, at every opportunity he gets. I also find it very hypocritical of him. He circulates a petition to "censor" my roving subzine, which is my letter of comment to zines, and then he steals quotes out of it. Eric Kane take note- this is hypocrisy at its extreme.

212 353-9695 934 R5F0

JUN 13, 1984

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AT&T COMMUNICATIONS DETAILS OF ITEMIZED CALLS

NO	DATE	TIME	PLACE	AREA-NUMBER	RATE APPLIED	MIN	AMOUNT
			CALLING NUMBER 353-9695				
1	MAY 20	541PM	TO NORTON	VA 703 679-3489	DIALED EVENING	1	.37
2	MAY 20	802PM	TO ROCKVILLE	MD 301 762-1761	" "	30	7.13
3	MAY 20	840PM	TO NORTHWALES	PA 215 699-7659	" "	11	2.56
4	MAY 21	831PM	TO SCOTTSDALE	AZ 602	" "	38	11.32
5	MAY 26	125PM	TO MADISON	WI 608 251-1251	DIALED NIGHT	25	4.07
6	MAY 26	228PM	TO MADISON	WI 608 256-2459	" "	54	8.71
7	MAY 26	445PM	TO DALTON	MA 413 684-0567	" "	12	1.84
8	MAY 28	524PM	TO WICHITA	KS 316 686-7935	DIALED EVENING	5	1.34
9	MAY 28	803PM	TO NORTHWALES	PA 215 699-7659	" "	29	6.20
10	JUN 5	918PM	TO CHARLES TN	WV 304 725-5537	" "	1	.32
11	JUN 5	919PM	TO PHILOMATH	OR 503 929-3223	" "	51	14.21
12	JUN 5	1011PM	TO CHARLES TN	WV 304 725-5537	" "	16	3.65
13	JUN 10	301PM	TO NORTHWALES	PA 215 699-7659	DIALED NIGHT	6	.91
14	JUN 10	311PM	TO WICHITA	KS 316 686-7935	" "	1	.24

CONTINUED

With that aside, maybe I can now get on with the business of constructing an entertaining subzine. Lets see, I don't have any letters to print, so what can I do? I know, I can start a dip game. I'd have the 1st, roving dip game in hobby history. But it will have to be something special- so I'll have to make it with special HR's, (no, not 74 pages), and it'll have to have players by invitation. I know what, in the tradition of good spirit and hobby fun, I'll call it the Golden Age Press Game. Now who to invite- I know, I'll try to get all the old Golden Age Greats to play. Lets see, if your name is on this list, you can be in the game. Its 1st come, 1st served: Bob Olsen, Steven Arnawoodian, Terry Tallman, Mark Berch, Dick/Julie, Gary Coughlan, John Michalski, Ken Peel, Steve Langley, Daf, Ducky Williams, or any other Golden Ager who wishes to play.

Like in other zines, when you play here, you'll have to give up certain rights. In W you give up the right to 2 week deadlines. And like in Magus you give up the right to know who Don Williams really is. Or in Manifest Destiny you give up the right to get your results at all. Or as in VOD, where you give up the right to ask the GM a question. So here in FIM, the players will have no rights at all, except that I will follow my stringent policy of giving the player the benefit of the doubt, except where I think it would otherwise be in bad taste for myself.

Now for my House Rules:

- 1: I will not be using DIAS, but proposed draws/concessions to anyone, or failing that, capturing 18 centers by fall turn, failing that, DIAS will be declared if there are 2 consecutive years without a center change.
- 2: Press (see below) allowed
- 3: The rulebook will be used to cover all other situations.
- 4: Deadlines will be of the 3 week variety
- 5: Where the rulebook doesn't cover it, the GM will exercise common sense.
- 6: Where common sense fails, the GM will exercise his right to be right, and the player will forfeit his right to be right, and his right of APEEL

As to the press- There are only a few things I DO NOT want, so I'll list them here, and give you examples, after all, this is the Golden Age Press game. I want the press to be as good, if not better than the press that used to appear way back then. I will enforce ~~my~~ these standards very strictly to the point where I'll ~~drop to delete~~ delete anything that I don't like. You have high standards to keep, so keep that in mind.

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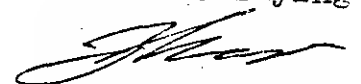
- A: I don't want any oneliners. You know the type of stuff like "The King of all the Russia's wishes peace in his time.
- B: I don't want any long press releases. By long I mean 20 words or more per each dateline. I hate to type. If it is longer than 20 words per, you had better send it in typed, spaced properly, yet not wasting space, on normal sized paper, tho not big paper.
- C: I don't want player negotiations. Press is for press, negotiations are for you twits to conduct in the mail.
- D: I don't want any of this Middle Class Eloquence garbage that we see written every now and then. I want the press to be on the up and up.
- E: You must use datelines that are either of the neutral variety, or easily identifiable to you as the player. Examples are: Woody can use hamster molester; Olsen could usebasher, or Honcy; Mark Berch could use God, or any other word referring to Deityesse; Bruce Linsey would have to use Novicebuster; and so on.
- F: Press couldn't mention any of the other players, tho it could mention other hobbyists, if they are deceased, or in the HoF, which constitutes the same thing, literally.
- G: Feuding in the press is encouraged, as long as you don't feud with a person, place, thing or idea. Try to stick to specifics, if you drift, you will find that I will drift your press into the ocean.
- H: For this special game, I will allow guest press. It may be in the form of Black press, as long as it follows all of these guidelines, which are really at a minimal.
- I: 2 liners are also discouraged, as are 3 liners. I want some good, juicy press, not the kind of stuff we can find in any zine, like Ere or W/KL.
- J: Press should be in English, but it doesn't have to be. However, if I don't understand that language, your press will be cut. As it stands now, I only understand NORTHERN ENGLISH, BROOKLYN SLANG.
- K: I'm intersted in quality, not quantity. If there isn't enough press to fill a couple of pages, I'll include some myself.
- L: No player may submit more than 5 press releases per game year.
- M: Press may be conditional upon who a possible standby might be, or what zine the next set of orders may appear in.
- N: Sexual references will be thrown out, unless stated according to hobby tradition.

I think that about covers it. These few press guides ought to make for a very interwting exchange of press releases among the players, me and myself. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask. I will answer your questions with the same crystal clear explanation, as I've provided above with the HR's and press regulations. Wouldn't want any of you to misinterpret what I'm saying.

Gee, and you people thought I get in trouble with my big mouth. In the last 2 weeks, both the Democrats and the Republicans made blunders. Kind of makes you wonder what shape the country is in. Reagan claiming to have signed legislation and that the bombers will arrive over their targets in 5 minutes, and Ferraro owning only 1 stock share in her husbands company, yet there are only 2 shares total. Talk about misleading information? And on top of it, they are millionaires, and they don't want the average American that she's alleged to represent, to see how much they're worth. Thats why old Zaccaro is balking on his tax return releases. Hey, they own 3 houses, one valued at \$600,000.

I suppose its time to end this issue of FIM. I hope you all enjoyed it, at least the enjoyable parts. Take care and have fun, and as the saying goes,

IN SOLIDARITY



Don't follow leaders,
Watch your parking meters.
-R. Zimmerman

ILLUMINATI (n.): any of a number of groups, reputedly of ancient origins, claiming special knowledge or enlightenment; any secret or mystical society or power bloc.

Disclaimer: The story you are about to read is fanciful. Any resemblance to any ethical or responsible person, inside or outside DipDom, is utterly impossible.

THE WAY THINGS WORK: HOW I CAME TO BE EMPLOYED BY THE COMPANY
-Ed Wrobel

I wiped my sweaty palms against my argyle sweater vest as I waited for the elevator. Imagine! Me- a mere novice invited to a meeting with the 3 biggest movers and shakers in all of DipDom! What could they possibly want? Mr. Baribaldi's note was curt: "See the return address. If you want to get anywhere in this hobby, be there Saturday morning at 9." Finally, the elevator...the 23rd floor... Mr. Baribaldi's office.

"I have an appointment," I squeaked to the receptionist. My nervousness was obvious.

"I'm sorry. Mr. Baribaldi is in conference. Please take a seat."

I considered asking her where to take the seat to, but decided against dangling a preposition so high up. Instead, I busied myself reading the back issues of DipLines lying around the reception area. Mr. Baribaldi had class- only the top zines were there: Diplomacy Digest, Diplomacy World, Bushwacker and some hallowed copies of the original Erewhon, a clone of the very best from the Golden Age of somebody's imagination. The only surprise was to see a copy of my very own Politesse, which I knew was not considered a postal DipLine by those who count the most. Still, it was buried underneath a triple issue of DD and no one had read it.

"We're going to take a meet over lunch, Monica. Hold all my calls. Who is this?"

I jumped to my feet. It was Mario Baribaldi, Runners World and Frederick the Daft!

"I'm- I'm- I'm- I'm Ed Wrobel, sir."

"Oh, Wrobel, yes...one of your boys, Runners?"

Mr. World whispered something in Mr. Baribaldi's ear.

"Of course, I had forgotten. Come along, Wrobel. You may join us for lunch."

Me- having lunch with them! I couldn't believe it! Mr. Baribaldi's limo was waiting for us in front of the building. I sat in the front with the chauffeur. It seemed like hours before we reached one of the poshest restaurants in the city and once again I could share the company of these three MegaDiplomatic giants. As we sipped dry martinis, the three discussed the upcoming DipCon.

RW: Sax will be at his most dangerous at the DipCon Society meeting. He will also be his own worst enemy there. My first advice is to give him plenty of rope. But beyond that he has to be corralled. First step, maximize attendance. Plenty of pre-Con publicity and oodles of publicity at the tournament. Get everybody there. Any effort by Sax to pack the house will thus flounder. Second step, the agenda should be: selection of the new site, #1, election of new committee #2, anything else #3. People will start drifting off during any procedural stuff, such as amending the Charter, so put it last. Third step, whichever of you is best at controlling a meeting with at least one troublemaker in it should actually chair the meeting. Fourth step, appoint me Parliamentarian at the opening of the meeting. Sax has a formidable knowledge of parliamentary procedure, and will use it against you to delay and disrupt if he isn't getting his way. I am at least (I believe) his equal in that regard. Fifth step, the election of the new Committee needs floor management. Please arrange to recognize

me first on the floor. I will propose that the present Committee, which has done such a fine job, be re-elected on a white ballot. Any move then, by Sax, to get himself or his cronies elected will appear divisive and ungenerous. If you can arrange for some person other than myself to be recognized first and to make that motion, so much the better. We can discuss strategy and tactics at the con, prior to the meeting. The seminar, or whatever it is to be, should be after the DipCon Society meeting. Any business not connected with DipCon Society affairs should be ruled out of order. That will shut Sax up to a degree. Any floor business which he may bring up about distribution of funds or whatever would be part of agenda item #3. Erb should then rule anything not relating to the current agenda out of order. He should also rule attempts to change the agenda out of order, since it is set up with the most important and essential items first. We can have some prearranged person for Erb to recognize to make that motion.

MB: However, there is one big problem with your plans. I do NOT want any discussion of how the funds are to be distributed. None.

RW: It had not occurred to me until I read Frederick's letter that Pontoonia is in fact a hobby service. Please be advised, therefore, that I will request the DipCon Committee consider granting funds for Pont. This constitutes an "official" request.

(At this point, Mr. Baribaldi and Mr. World exchanged knowing winks; I did not, at the time, understand what their winks knew.)

RW: Insofar as the NAFD is concerned, funding of the NAFD is inadvisable, it seems to me. But turning funds over to the administration of NAFD, to be distributed where needs arise would be a good idea.

(Additional winks.)

FD: Let's recognize the possibility that people just might ask the NAFD to run such a meeting, so Runners should be prepared to be "surprised" by such a development and reluctantly take the chair.

(Further winks.)

RW: I do want to reiterate for the umpteenth time my suggestion that the DipCon Society meeting needs good floor management.

FD: My feeling is that you should remain a low-key non-voting ex officio member of the DipCon 1/2/3 Comm. I agree that it should not be publicized, and that c.c.'s of letters which go beyond the four of us need not even show that you were sent a copy.

RW: My position with the DipCon Committee is entirely up to you guys. I have no preference in the matter. However, if I am to be considered ex officio, I would prefer the matter not be noised about. The entre is there if you want to use it. We should have a couple of allies, aside from myself, on the floor. This will have to be well stage-managed. Once Frederick's amendments are on the floor, we are home free. The debate on those will last a while, at least. If the whole thing bogs down, I can always rise, with a very weary tone, and say, "This meeting has been going on for two hours now, and we're getting nowhere. I move we adjourn." Again, we can discuss all this at the con.

MB: We will also need a summary cum soft sell to go along with it. I propose the following: "The above amendments are to streamline the constitution, and make some things a bit more explicit."

FD: A good ploy would be to require that all amendments be submitted 14 days in advance.

MB: Yes, "14 days prior" sounds right. But then if there is one section that is ditchable and unpopular, we 3 can move to delete it. Otherwise, we will require that anyone else's package should be voted on as a single unit.

RW: Of course, Sax will hang himself. He will try to disrupt the meeting at the beginning, you may be sure. As Parliamentarian I will advise you he is out of order, of course.

FD: In going through my old files, I came across a lot of correspondence going back to 1976-77 concerning the famous MNC referendum. There is a postal player in Texas (not a publisher) who is preparing a dossier on Sax, so I sent him copies of some of this material. This person, whom I'm not at liberty to name, expects to start publishing his own zine in, perhaps, six months, and one of his features will be an expose on Sax. If you have any particular juicy items (His, plus your replies) that you'd like included in this expose, if you'll send me material, I can photocopy it here free, send the copies to him, and return the originals to you, if you're interested. I also sent Mario a copy of a letter I'd written to Cal Black, in which I answered his question "What has Sax done wrong?" by saying, "Ah, let me count the ways" and giving a 3-page list of misdemeanors. I didn't know Mario in 1976, so I thought he'd like to have a copy for his collection, since we have to deal with Sax in '82 at DipCon.

RW: It would not hurt to line up some floor allies in advance, and have prior understandings about whom is to be recognized to do what. Sax can be expected to act badly and should be given rope to do so. Remember that the Charter allows for a Committee of One (or Two) as well as of Three, so that we could simply elect Erb alone. Or we could elect Erb with the proviso that he appoint two others. Or whatever. I would like to suggest that a "slate" approach be considered, with (e.g.) Erb, Glin and Hardee's (or whomever). Anyway, once these items are over, we go to the Amendments item and Erb should then automatically recognize Frederick.

FD: Erb, Mario and Runners have to decide (along with me) whether to nominate Glin for a seat on the DipCon Society Admin. Comm. at DipCon XV.

RW: My proposal has been to get you guys reelected on a white ballot. It would mean being sure to recognize me first so that I can thank the Committee for its great job, express great confidence in your talent to handle the next Con, and move your immediate reelection. This will short-circuit any plan Sax may have (if he's there) to try to get himself and/or his cronies elected. An open nomination is one thing, but a white ballot proposal would force him to get the meeting to repudiate the present committee first, which puts him in the bad guy role. (Now, I understand Mario may not wish to serve again. The Charter provides that he can resign and nominate his own successor or have the Chairman appoint one for him. Either way. But that's the way to go if Mario doesn't really want to serve...get the committee reelected and then, later, replace Mario.)

FD: I do not wish to serve another year on the Comm. Perhaps we could get some successors lined up in advance. Why not try to get Erb, Mario and Glin elected on a white ballot at DipCon, and then letting Mario resign later for someone agreeable to all 3 of them?

MB: How do you think it will look if Erb gets up and sez, in effect, "I was elected in 1980, then in 1981 we all reelected ourselves, then in 1982 we're amending the constitution so that I don't run again in 1982 either." I'd rather have Kate Birn or Jonathan Crewso as New Yorkers. We'll see.

FD: Crewso will volunteer to serve on the 3-man DipCon Society Comm. They hate Sax and will not support him on anything. They suggest that Garry Cufflink be asked to serve as the third member. They're willing to support Erb's re-election as chairman.

MB: Crewso has given me a huge amount of feedback on my DipCon activities and has given DipCon prominent mention in his W for the last three issues, the last very strongly urging that people come to Origins. He might make a good choice. He would certainly beat Sax in any election.

FD: As you know, I only half facetiously once suggested that the New York metro area be made a separate hobby region.

RW: In fact, the more Sax pushes, the more alienated and bored people will feel, so that by the time he gets really obnoxious, a motion to adjourn would sail through.

MB: Ah, yes, Runners, that is well-taken...several times. Frederick?

FD: I categorically denied that I had used the words "whore and slut" in any letter. I admitted that I probably said something like "living together without benefit of clergy." My generation still finds something improper about living together without marriage. Anyway, Kate was completely hysterical and beyond reason. She is also quite paranoid about plots by "World, Baribaldi, Lumphead and Daft to drive me out of the hobby." In her sharp New York accent, she snarled threats at me to sue me for libel. She talked about holding a BirnCon at her home the same weekend as our DipCon. All I said was "Well, of course you have a perfect right to do so." In my inner heart, I will admit to you (NOT for publication) that I was saying "Whoopie!" Off the record and not for publication, Jonathan Crewso has verbally threatened to punch me when he sees me. If they actually sue, I can file a counter-suit for "assault."

RW: As to 1984, avoid the west coast if you can, I think it's the kiss of death. (We pause here whilst I bite my tongue.)

FD: I agree, we should try to "pack the house" with delegates who will support Detroit in '83 and Chicago in '84, to make sure the Con doesn't go to New York either of those years.

MB: The problem here, as I see it, is that the constitution makes it very difficult to not go to the west coast in 1984. Maybe in 1984 we'd be better off with GenCon East as a host.

FD: I'd suggest that we promote Detroit for the 1983 DipCon and Chicago for 1984. I don't think DipCon should ever go to the west coast again, as no one but Californians shows up. If we can amend the DipCon Charter, we can approve both of these bids at the same time.

MB: Runners seems to be afraid that eliminating the present Area III will force the con onto the west coast every three years. It will not under the proposed wording. Every three years it's the west coast's turn. However, all the meeting has to do is vote that there is no suitable con and the west coast is out.

RW: It's true that under the right circumstances, you might be out here once every six years, but under the current system, the same circumstances would result in an 8-year span. This is therefore one amendment I would feel disposed to oppose on the floor. If you still feel the change is best, by all means propose it, and we'll see how the vote goes. No big deal, I suppose... and having us on opposite sides of something might not be a bad idea in terms of public relations. In any event, I'm not going to be bitter if I lose a floor fight on this one...any rotation is better than none. But there will be a floor fight...which, as I said, would be good for PR anyway, since we four are going to be seen working in tandem and/or agreement a lot of the time.

MB: Well, Wrobel, as you can see, we've been hard at work, even aside from corresponding with Sax. Things are going well. Also I am trying to generate a written record of what I do. Next year someone else will be the tournament director. I'll give him my written stuff. By trying to be thorough, and centralizing things (knowing winks all around), and considering various ideas, I hope to make it easier for the next guy- which could be you. Let me know what you think.

me: Gosh, Mr. Baribaldi, there seems to be a lot of politics involved. I don't know if I could handle it.

MB: There is no politics, except in your own mind. If you refrained from manipulating half-truths, some of us might take you seriously. Misquoting me to my face only confirms the popular judgement that you can't be trusted!